

**Virginia General Assembly, December 28, 1784.
Resolution on Potomac River Navigation & James
Madison Copy. Transcription: The Writings of James
Madison, ed. Gaillard Hunt. New York: G.P. Putnam's
Sons, 1900-1910.**

**RESOLUTIONS TOUCHING THE NAVIGATION AND JURISDICTION OF THE
POTOMAC. MAD. MSS.**

December 28th. 1784.

Resolved that the Commissioners or any two of them appointed on the 28th. day of June last to concert with commissioners on the part of Maryland, regulations touching the navigation and jurisdiction of the Potowmac, be further authorized with the said commissioners in representing to the State of Pennsylvania, that it is in contemplation of the two States to promote the clearing and extending the navigation of Potowmac from tide-water upwards as far as the same may be found practicable; to open a convenient road from the head of such navigation to the waters running into the Ohio; and to render these waters navigable as far as may be necessary and proper: that said work will require great expense which may not be repaid, unless a free use be secured to the said States & their citizens, of the waters of the Ohio and its branches, so far as the same lie within the limits of Pennsylvania: that as essential advantages will accrue from such works to a considerable portion of the said State, it is thought reasonable that the Legislature thereof should by some previous act engage that for the encouragement of the said works all articles of produce or merchandize which may be conveyed to or from either of the said two states, through either of the said rivers within the limits of Pennsylvania, to or from any place without the said limits, shall pass throughout free from all duties or tolls

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whatsoever, other than such tolls as may be established and be necessary for reimbursing expenses incurred by the State or its Citizens in clearing, or for defraying the expense of preserving the navigation of the said rivers: and that no articles imported into the State of Pennsylvania through the channel or channels or any part thereof to be opened as aforesaid and vended or used within the said State, shall be subject to any duties or imposts other than such articles would be subject to if imported into the said State thro' any other channel whatsoever: and it is further resolved that in case a joint representation in behalf of this State and of Maryland shall be rendered by circumstances unattainable, the said Commissiours or any two of them may of themselves make such representations on the subject as will in such event become proper; and that in either event they report their proceedings to the next General assembly.

Resolved that a copy of the above Resolutions be transmitted forthwith by the Executive to the State of Maryland. 1

1 Madison also had a scheme for improving the roads of the State, and prepared resolutions in the winter of 1784-85 to be introduced at this session of the Legislature, but the time being inopportune he allowed the matter to drop.

“Whereas the opening & keeping in repair of direct roads from the different parts of this Common'th to the several market Towns, and from one market Town to another would greatly encourage agriculture by cheapening the transportation of its productions to the places of consumption & exportation, and would in other respects contribute to the improvement of the Country by facilitating intercourse between the different parts thereof, and it is considered by the present general assembly, that altho' the various necessary burdens which now press on the people render a general plan for the aforesaid purpose unadvisable at this moment, yet that such a beginning ought to be made in the work as will not only produce immediate advantage to the community; but will lead to a more diffusive & complete execution thereof: and it is the more necessary that the principal roads should be so straightened before the value of the ground to be obtained from

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individuals increases. Be it therefore enacted that the governour with the advice of the Council of State shall be & he hereby is authorized to cause surveys to be made in order to determine the best courses for roads, (having regard to the nature of the ground as well as to distance) from & to the following places to wit; from and for executing such surveys the Governor with the advice aforesaid is further authorized to appoint a proper person for each of such surveys who shall be allowed a sum not exceeding per day during his actual employment in the service, and who may take with him so many assistants & such daily wages as the Executive shall approve, the said Surveyors shall make to the Governour the
"— *Mad. MSS.*